

MARVEL

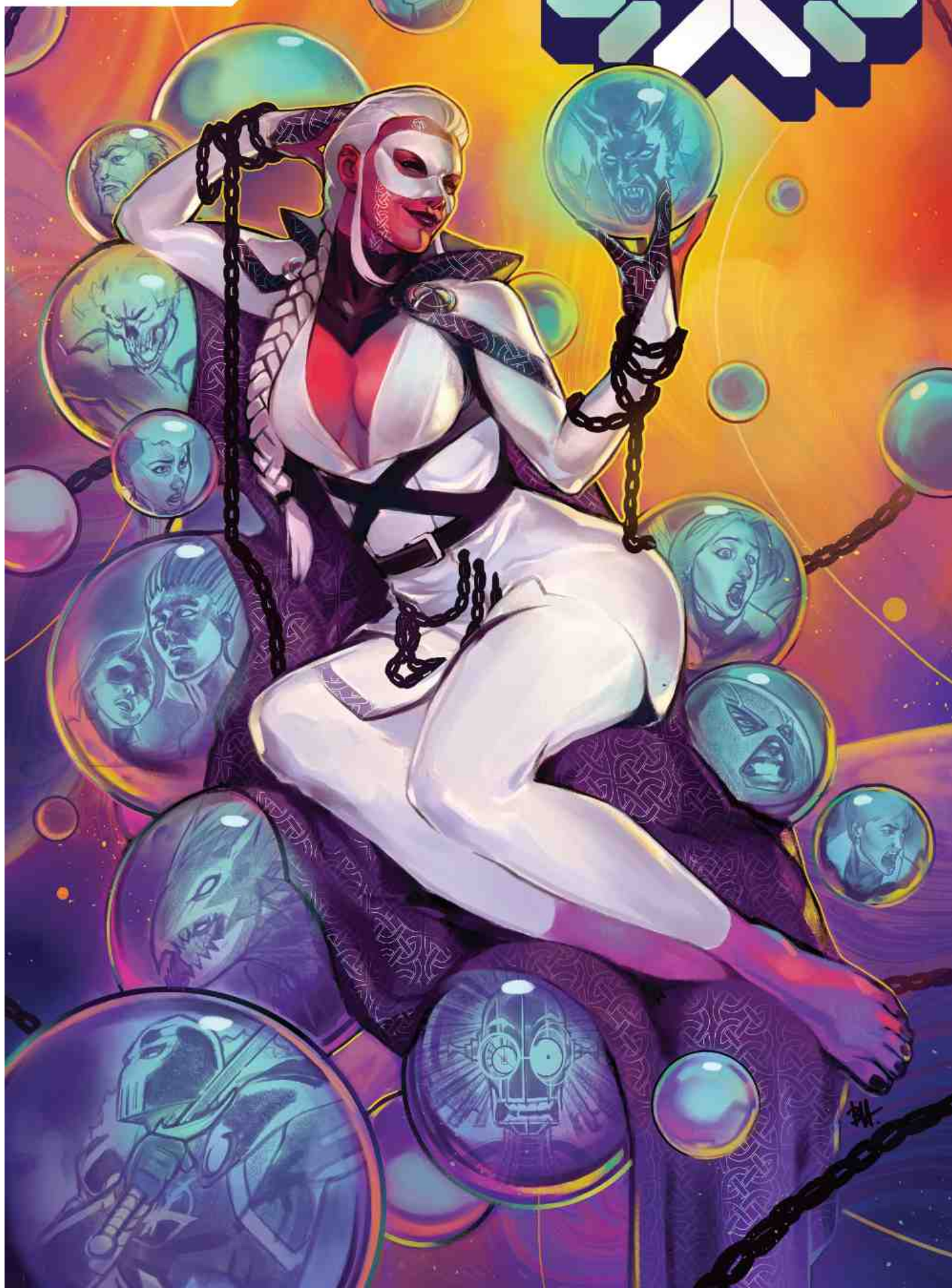
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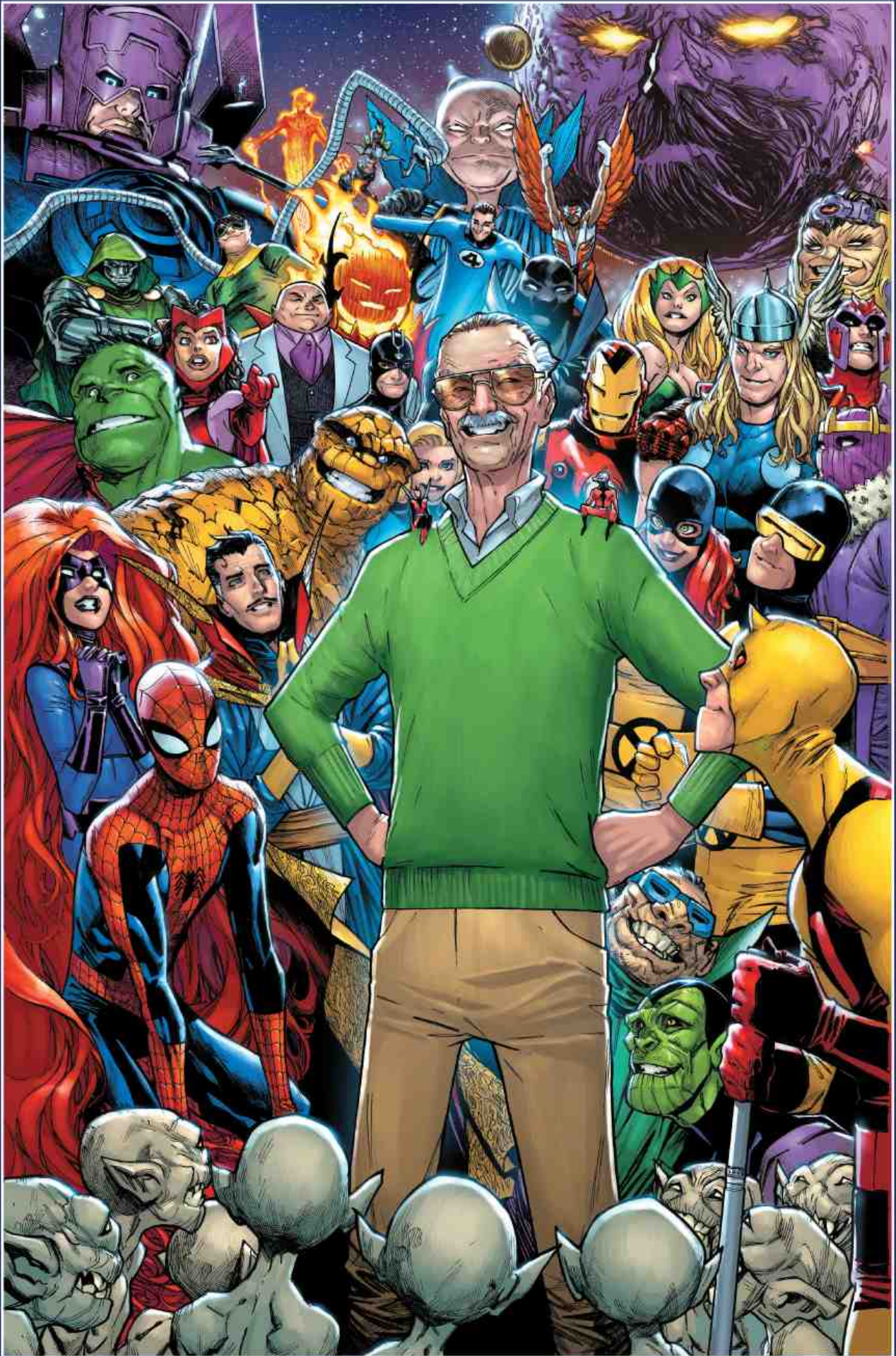


SPURRIER
DIAZ
PARSONS
BLEE

LEGION OF X



100 YEARS AND STILL INSPIRING US ALL



WE LOVE YOU, STAN!



I'm sorry, *Husk*. Just this once...

...I'm *not* gonna blow the bloody doors off.

Los Angeles, California.



Angel called for an *elite investigative unit*, yeah?

We can't nuke our way in just 'cos your old billionaire *boyfriend's* too busy skinny-dippin' in caviar to answer the intercom.

I'm telling you, Chamber--I heard a scream! Warren could be in trouble!



Thing *is*, Paige, I'm trying to be a bit less--*explodey*. I had a run-in with *Doc Nemesis* recently--sort of...*incinerated his arm* a bit--

God, you didn't spill his coffee, did you?

--and it's made me wonder if mmmmmaybe I have a slight *over-reliance* on *psychic fireballs*. I wish to grow as a person.

Let's just wait a bit, eh? Maybe get a drink, talk about old times, see where it lea--



AaaaAAAAA!



Chamber, you concupiscent imbecile! Stop embarrassing yourself with *exes* and *open fire*!

A-ah what?

Rrrrrp

Oh crap...











JACKIE "JACKS" CHOPRA [BLACK KNIGHT]

THREAT/UTILITY ASSESSMENT--[Dr. H. McC.] [XF EYES ONLY]

> Daughter of **DANE WHITMAN** [ref: **BK/DW**], the manic-depressive, violent sword-wielding maniac, anachronistic-armor-clad swashbuckler, and failed Avenger.

> The apple does not fall far from the tree.

> Neither daughter nor father knew of each other's existence until recently. Jacks was raised an orphan within the British care system, a difficult adolescence that has left her with more than her fair share of bitterness, trauma and snark.

> Since meeting, the pair have entered a refreshingly egalitarian partnership in which they interchangeably fulfill the role of the Black Knight.

> At the core of the mental disquiet lies the **EBONY BLADE**, a magical artifact whose potency grows to match the negative feelings of its wielder. The angrier or more forlorn the user, the mightier the weapon.

> [NB: Ilyana has speculated -- based on a long-range scrying analysis conducted at my request -- that the blade has other, darker qualities, as yet unknown.]

> During a recent spot of extradimensional silliness [ref: **PEREGRINE CHILD**], **MARVEL GIRL** and **SYNCH** had occasion to psychically scan Ms. Chopra up close -- providing much of the intel contained herein. And one interesting further tidbit:

> Jackie Chopra is a mutant.

> At time of writing, her mutant abilities -- if indeed she has any -- are either too subtle to measure or as-yet unactivated. She is not aware of her genetic nature.

> My request to surveil and test her, to attempt to "jump-start" her powers, was denied by the council. "She's got enough to deal with as it is," as Jean put it.

Summary: One to watch. From afar. Quietly.
And that sword could come in handy.

LEGION OF X

FLIGHT RISK

To forge a new type of justice fit for Krakoa, NIGHTCRAWLER has assembled a team of LEGIONNAIRES and built an HQ in THE ALTAR -- a bubble reality contained in the dreaming psyche of LEGION and adjacent to the Astral Plane.

A strange entity has emerged on the Astral Plane: a woman named Mother Righteous, who possesses the mysterious power to grant certain wishes -- in exchange for gratitude and devotion -- and to spy on scenes far away. Righteous offered the power of a Ghost Rider to Legion, and when he refused, Banshee took the deal and became the "Spirit of Variance." Enlisting him in a mission to help Legion against yet-unknown threats, Righteous is now keeping a close eye on Warlock, who helped design defenses to protect the Altar from an astral Technarcy taking form in the abyss.

Recently, Nightcrawler sprouted a pair of horns. Suspecting a mutagenic catalyst, Nightcrawler, Doctor Nemesis and Pixie tracked a similar morphologic change to the X-Corp headquarters, where they discovered the new Black Knight, Jackie Chopra, already locked in battle with a heavily mutated Angel.



[CHAMBER]



[DOCTOR NEMESIS]



[BLACK KNIGHT]



[NIGHTCRAWLER]



[JUGGERNAUT]



[CYPHER]



[BLINDFOLD]



[LEGION]



[HUSK]



[ANGEL]



[PIXIE]



[FORGETMENOT]



[LOST]



[SPIRIT OF VARIANCE/BANSHEE]



[PROFESSOR X]

"FAMILY TIES"



8

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Krakoia.

You had the lobster,
then the tiramisu.

Are you
sure?

Totally! You
made me sing "The
Memory Remains" at
karaoke. We drank tequila
on the beach! You really
don't remember
our date?

No. Although
I *did* wonder
why I woke up with
shellfish
breath.

Ach. Look, *Lost*, there's this little
bit of tech--goes behind your ear,
lets you remember me. Even
Cain's got one.

Wish I
didn't. Yammerin'
on like a lovesick
puppy...

I bet
you forgot to
put it on this morning,
that's all. But the
memories are *in* there.
Maybe if you just
focus and--

Look!

Cypher?

Wh-where
am I?

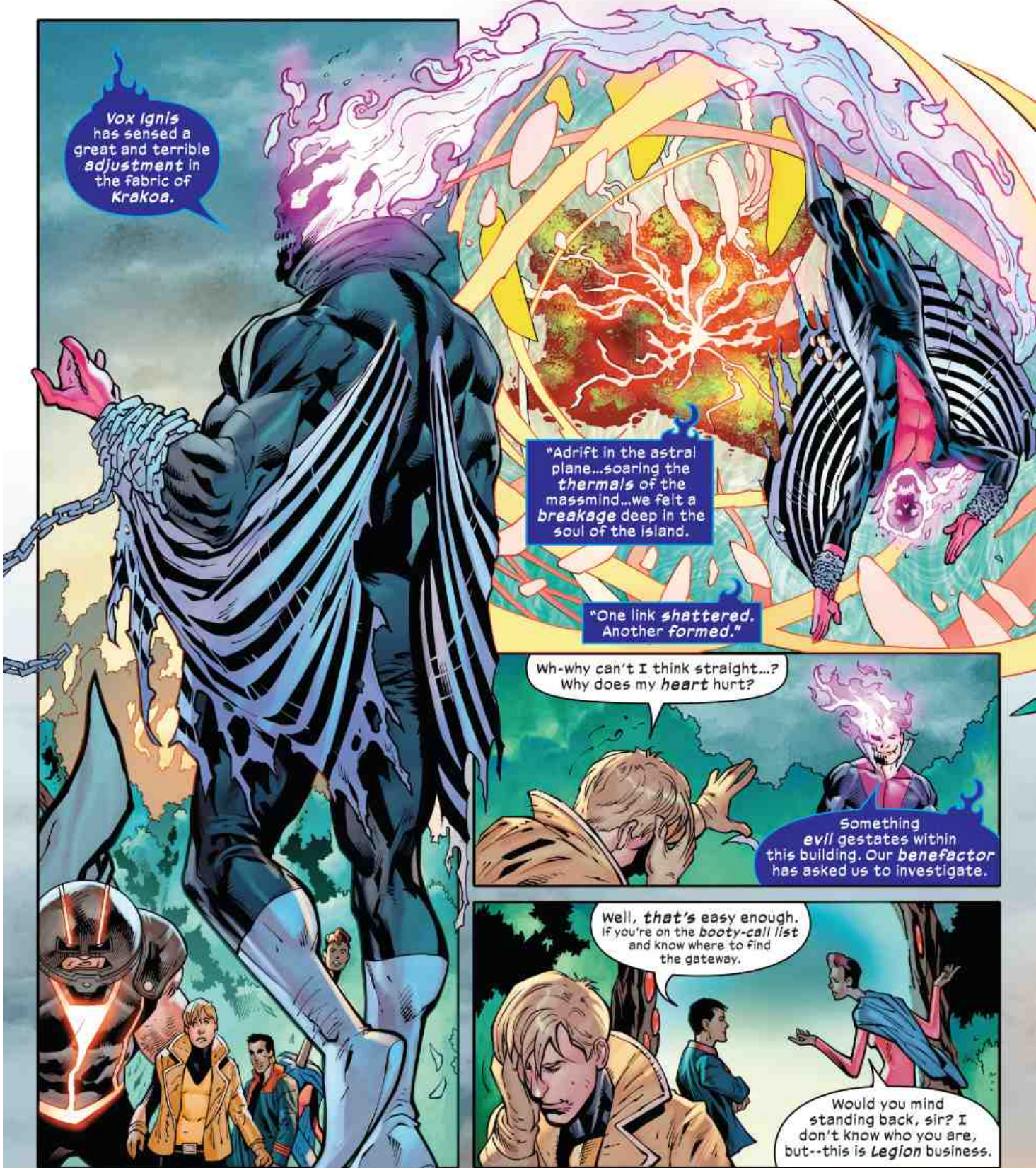
It's, uh. It's
Nightcrawler's
home. I think he
calls it the
Narthex.

F-from the Greek.
Hollow fennel. Fire of the
gods. Mm. I think I was...
trying to get *inside*,
b-but...there's no
way in.

Haw!
Challenge
accepted.

Cain, wait,
there's--





Vox Ignis
has sensed a
great and terrible
adjustment in
the fabric of
Krakoa.

"Adrift in the astral
plane...soaring the
thermals of the
massmind...we felt a
breakage deep in the
soul of the island.

"One link *shattered*.
Another *formed*."

Wh-why can't I think straight...?
Why does my *heart* hurt?

Something
evil gestates within
this building. Our *benefactor*
has asked us to investigate.

Well, *that's* easy enough.
If you're on the *booty-call* list
and know where to find
the gateway.

Would you mind
standing back, sir? I
don't know who you are,
but--this is *Legion* business.

Leave it to us
professiona--

Uh.

SHLOPP





NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVE OF THE SORCERERS SUPREME

To those who observe the ebb and flow of the arcane sphere, it is well known that any entity pretending to the title "the spirit of vengeance" is overstating its uniqueness.

The origins of such beings are subject to much speculation and little consensus, but what is undeniable is that they are many. Most (though not all) bond themselves to the flesh and psyche of a living person. Generally speaking, it is the temperaments and beliefs of the hosts that distinguish one "Ghost Rider" from another.

But not always. In the annals of occult gossip, there arises, from time to time, reference to individuals among this spectral class whose eccentricity marks them out. One such is the so-called "spirit of variance." Details remain frustratingly scarce, but what emerges from the several sources is that, at some point in the past millennia, one of the spirits underwent a revelatory shift in perspective. A mutation, as some might put it, of form and function.

This lone being, having observed the fruits of its own labors, came to a shattering conclusion. To wit: that vengeance is a brake upon progress, that revenge is a circular business harmful to all parties and that all retributive justice is, in fact, an expression of societal stagnation and a signpost of impending decay.

It, alone, embraced a new doctrine. One of change. Constant, relentless adjustment. Restyling itself "the spirit of variance," determined to catalyze change wherever it went. Its exploits were pathetically short-lived. Its siblings collectively denounced it as an aberration and attempted, en masse, to destroy it.

That they succeeded appears likely, given the unhappy entity's disappearance from all record. And yet whispers persist. That it was able to escape the persecution of its brothers...that it found a benefactor capable of protecting and concealing it...that the time will come when it is bound to a like-minded host, soaring on the updraft of its ever-evolving powers.

Time, as always, will tell.



"It started on my very first mission as the **Black Knight**."

"I had a run-in with the **X-Men**. The *proper* ones. Your basic *reality incursion* and *demonic-transformation* scenario."

"Since then, something's been...*building*. Like, behind my eyes."

"Last week, it felt like a *dam* broke. Wherever I went, people started acting *crazy*."

"Saved a bloke from **Dark Elves** in the Ural Mountains. Moment he shook my hand, he started shooting *ice beams* out of his elbows."

"Kidnappee in **Marrakesh**. (Robot bandits---you know.) Big grateful hug then---*zip!*---invisible above the waist."

"Last time it happened? **Manspreader** on the tube. Started screaming in the *Elder tongue* and summoning *UnThings* through his eyes."

"Well. You can get *mutant tests* now, can't you? Company called, what is it. **Orchid?** **Orca?** something."

"All these people, for an hour after I *touched* 'em, they'd test *positive*--then it *faded* away. Back to normality."

"And the only one who *didn't* revert to good old **Homo sapiens**...?"

*The story's all told in **Death of Doctor Strange: X-Men/Black Knight #1!** --SB

Yes, yes, yes, very dramatic, it's you, you're a *mutant*.



We knew.

You... what?

Mmm. *Marvel Girl* detected it. I have no idea why she didn't tell you. "Feelings," I expect.

Stay still.



Talking of feelings--

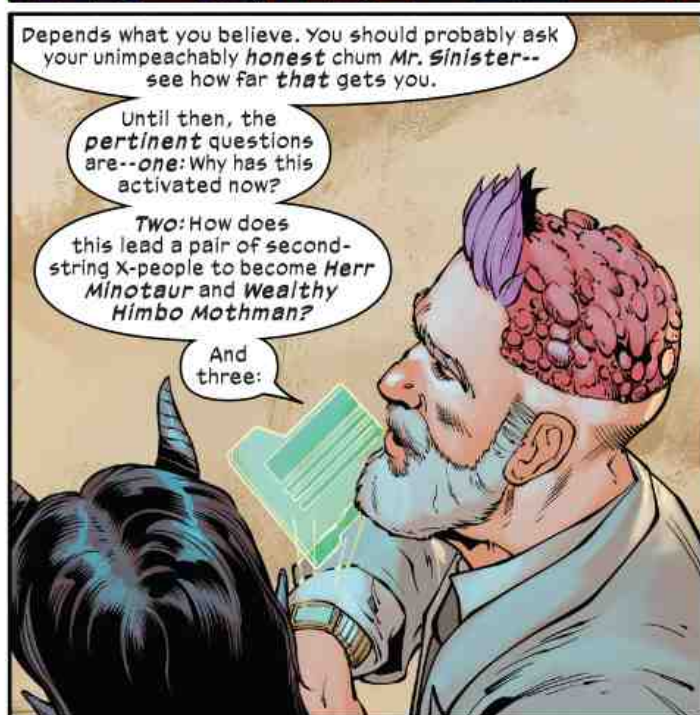
I'm fine, Pixie. Never better.

Just your average plucky *imp* dissolving into the voracious appetites of a savage super-predator.



Fascinating. A *mutagenic field*. It seems her power is to temporarily manifest--or, if you prefer, *activate*--an *X-Gene* in those she touches.

Activate? Wait--you mean, whatever makes us *us*, it lies dormant in *them*? I-is that true?



Depends what you believe. You should probably ask your unimpeachably *honest* chum Mr. *Sinister*--see how far *that* gets you.

Until then, the *pertinent* questions are--*one*: Why has this activated now?

Two: How does this lead a pair of second-string X-people to become *Herr Minotaur* and *Wealthy Himbo Mothman*?

And *three*:



Would you like to try some of my cerebrally harvested *psychedelics*? You seem like the sort of angry, self-destructive, *damaged type* who is simply perfect for my research, so--

Nemesis!

Ht-hrm--and *three*: Why did you come here today?







Wake up, Charles Xavier.



Blindfold?
But...I thought you were d--

You think a great many things, Professor. Some of them are even right.



Ruth, your speech pattern, it's diff--

Ah.

I'm dreaming.

Yes. Oh yes. Although this is no more or less real for that.



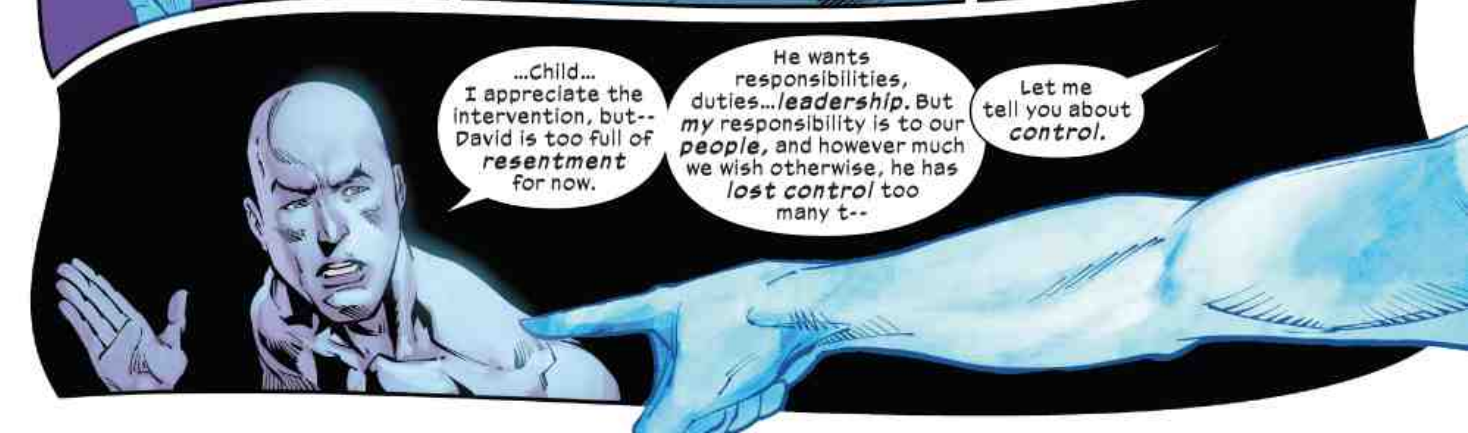
...
David sent you.

I sent me. Though it's much the same thing, in its way.



You need to settle your differences, Professor. One way or another. Please. Visit him.

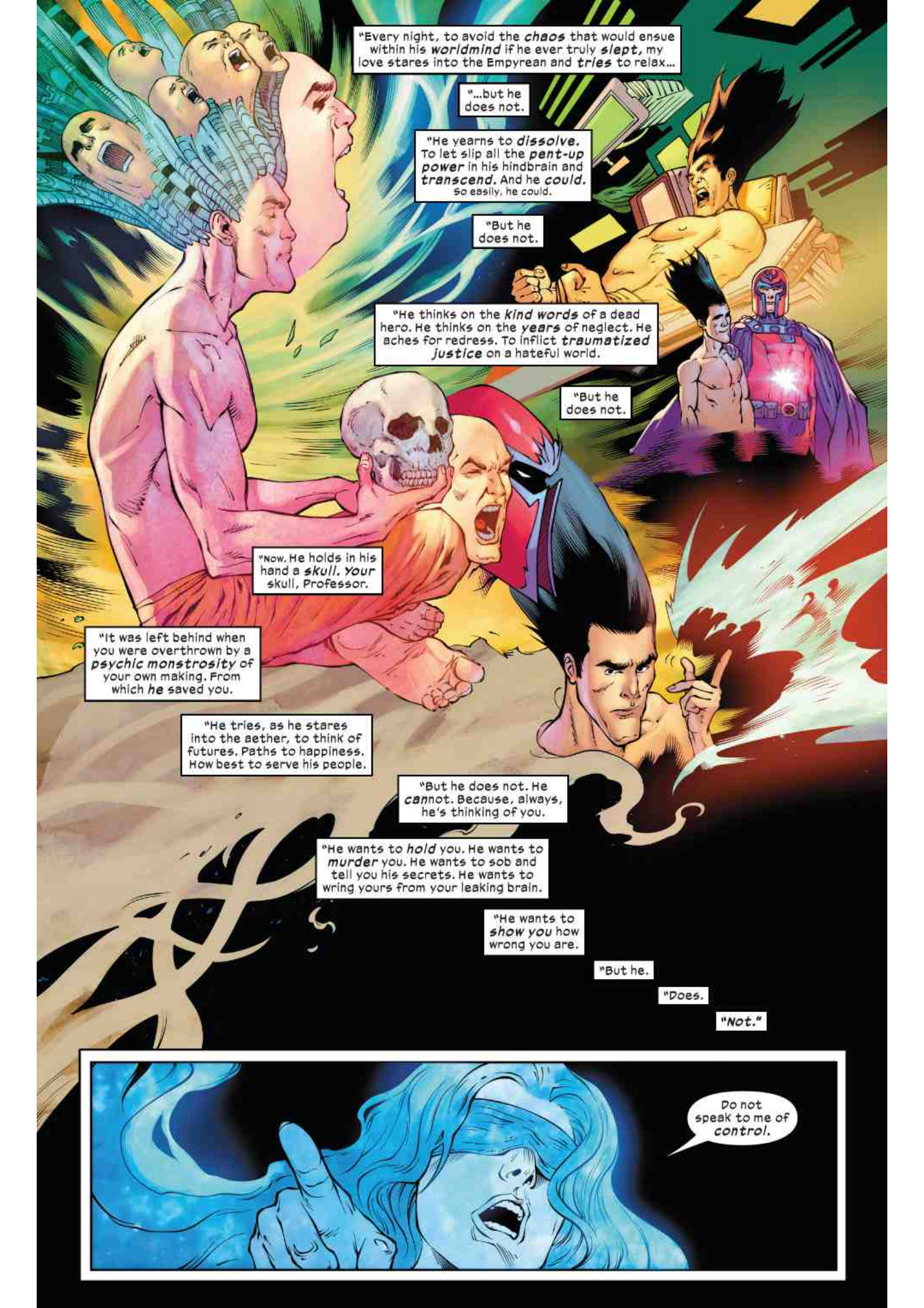
He cannot endure without resolution, but his pride prevents overture.



...Child... I appreciate the intervention, but-- David is too full of resentment for now.

He wants responsibilities, duties...*leadership*. But my responsibility is to our people, and however much we wish otherwise, he has lost control too many t--

Let me tell you about control.



"Every night, to avoid the *chaos* that would ensue within his *worldmind* if he ever truly *slept*, my love stares into the Empyrean and *tries* to relax...

"...but he does not.

"He yearns to *dissolve*. To let slip all the *pent-up power* in his hindbrain and *transcend*. And he *could*. So easily, he could.

"But he does not.

"He thinks on the *kind words* of a dead hero. He thinks on the *years* of neglect. He aches for redress. To inflict *traumatized justice* on a hateful world.

"But he does not.

"Now. He holds in his hand a *skull*. *Your* skull, Professor.

"It was left behind when you were overthrown by a *psychic monstrosity* of your own making. From which *he* saved you.

"He tries, as he stares into the aether, to think of futures. Paths to happiness. How best to serve his people.

"But he does not. He *cannot*. Because, always, he's thinking of you.

"He wants to *hold* you. He wants to *murder* you. He wants to sob and tell you his secrets. He wants to wring yours from your leaking brain.

"He wants to *show* you how wrong you are.

"But he.

"Does.

"Not."



Do not speak to me of control.



This enmity.
It's *unreasonable*.
I wasn't aware he even
existed for most of
his life. If anyone is
to blame, it's
his moth--

Then
come and *tell*
him that. If you
truly believe
it.



Tell him
that a great telepath,
given to scrying for mutants
the world over, had no idea--
no *suspicion*--of his own
inconvenient legacy.

Tell him
you simply didn't
know, Professor.
Because--at the
moment?



It reads a
lot like you didn't
want to.



I don't
know how to help
something I don't
understand.

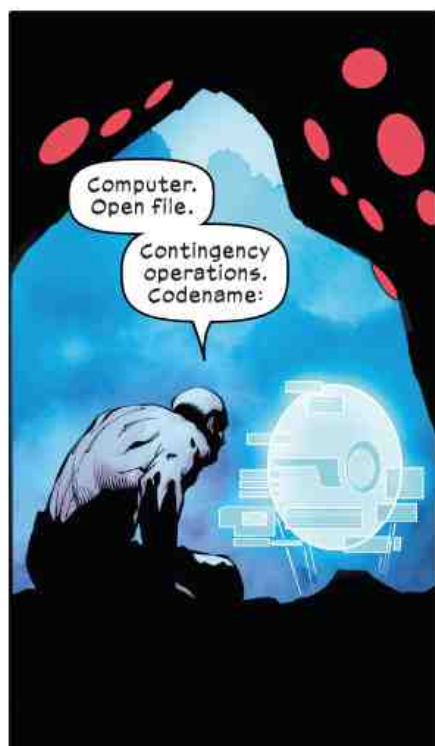
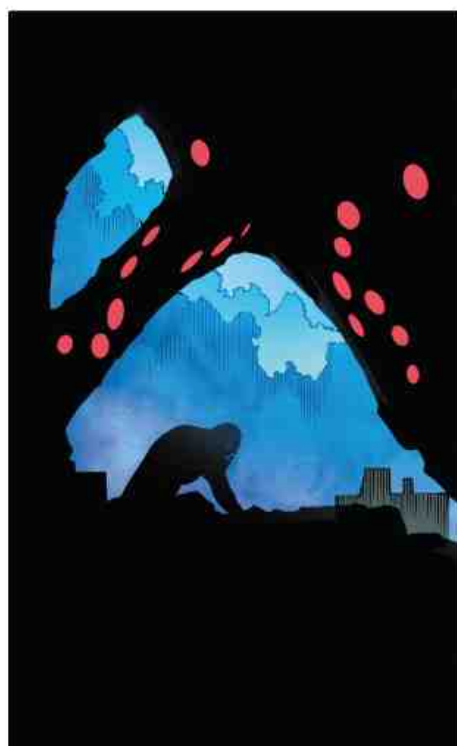


Pft. He
doesn't need
your *help*, you
lonely, old
monster.



Huuuhhh--!

He
needs your
love.



Computer.
Open file.

Contingency
operations.
Codename:



Daedalus.

Bavaria,
Germany.

It's faint,
but...we're close.
Whoever put the
whammy on you, the
spell was cast
nearby...

Are, uh,
Are you okay,
Mr. Wagner?

Ach, you
have a kind
heart to ask,
Jacks.

In truth,
I am feeling--a
little lost.

Changes to
my *flesh* I can
endure. I have been
mistaken for a monster
for as long as I can
remember. But...
my *heart*? Ach.

I have spent my life guided
by *faith* and drawn to joy.
But...lately...?

The things
I have *seen*...the
role of *shepherd* I
have struggled to fulfill...
let us simply say
things have been...
heavy, ja?

I am
unaccustomed
to mistrusting my
own spirit.

Ohhhh,
I know *that*
feeling.

But look, if it's any consolation,
you're handling it pretty well. Like--
if what's happening to you is the
same as what happened
to *Angel*--

It is.

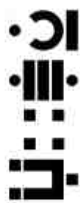
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BAMF

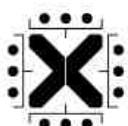




Next: The Winding Way.



NEXT



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➤ Legion of X #8

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Sabretooth & the Exiles #2

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